Increase in Steel Prices

29 SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that addressing a news conference at Delhi on January 17, 1986 he said that he could not rule out and increase in Steel prices ; and

(b) if so, the reasons for the proposed increase in steel prices?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI K.C. PANT): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Steel plants are trying to absorb to the maximum extent the rise in input costs, and no increase in steel prices is proposed for the present.

Complaints Before Press Council of India

30. SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) what is the total number of complaints pending before the Press Council of India ;

(b) whether it is a fact that some members of the Council have suggested amendments to the rules of representation on the Council by the Journalists ; and

(c) if so, what are the details in this regard and what action Government propose to take in the matter ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI V.N. GADGIL): (a) As on February 18, 1986, 246 complaints (77 under Section 13 and 169 under Section 14 of press council Act) were pending before the press council for adjudication.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir, representative of The Indian Federation of Working Journalists on the Council has sought amendment to the procedure as contained in the rules of nomination professional members on the Council. The Council in its meeting held on 23-12-85 decided that all members be requested to send by March 31, 1986 their suggestions in concrete terms for amendment of the procedure of nomination as contained in the Press Council Act and the Press Council rules to make the procedure of nomination of professional members more representative for consideration of All purposes committee which may invite the views of the notified Associations before formulating its recommendations for consideration of the Council.

Doordarshan News

31. SHRI KAPIL VERMA : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) what steps Government are taking to strengthen the news collection machinery of Doordarshan to reduce its dependence on other agencies to cater to its special needs; and

(b) whether Government propose to set up a separate cadre specialise to meet its requirements and give Doordarshan news professional touch?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI V.N. GADGIL): (a) It is proposed to put into operation properly equipped vehicles alongwith news gathering teams in major Centres like Delhi, Bombay, Madras and Calcutta to strengthen the news collection machinery of Doordarshan. This will also ensure better visuals and commentary from the scene of occurrence.

(b) No such proposal is presently under consideration.

FUNCTIONAL FREEDOM TO ALL INDIA RADIO

32. SHRI KAPIL VERMA : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to grant functional freedom to A.I.R. as given to Doordarshan to increase its credibility among the people ;

(b) whether A.I.R. propose to introduce features like "Janvani" and "Sach Ki Parchai" "Rajni", "Newsline" etc. as telecast on T.V.; and

(c) whether Government propose to pay more attention to A.I.R. than hitherto in view of the fact that it is commonman's medium covering much greater part of population than T.V. ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI V. N. GADGIL) : (a) Even now both the media enjoy full freedom in all professional matters.

(b) Doordarshan is a visual medium, Programme formats found suitable for telecast may not necessarily be suitable for Radio also. There is, therefore, no proposal to introduce over Radio programme like "Janvani", "Sach Ki Parchai", etc. However, Radio broadcast programme like "Question Time" in English and "Prakashan ke Beech Mein" in Hindi in the National programmes series.

In these programmes heads of public sector undertakings, banking institutions etc. as well as Ministers answer questions put to them by an invited audience. The stations in the network also broadcast programme like "People Forum" and other field based programmes to focus attention on the problems of comman man

(c) It is not correct that sufficient attention had not been paid for the development of AIR. The present network of AIR consisting of 88 stations is covering 90 percent of the population in the country. During the 7th Plan a provision of Rs. 700 crores has been earmarked for the development of AIR. After completion of the schemes included in the 7th Plan, the number of AIR stations will go up to 203 and the population coverage will extand to 97.5 per cent.

Restructuring the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

33. SHRI KAPIL VERMA : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state : What action Government propose to take on the suggestion for restructuring the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on the lines of the Railway Board, with an Information Board comprising professional heads of media units to render policy advice to the Minister leaving the Secretary of the Ministry only to deal with financial and administrative matters with a view to developing a relationship between Information and Broadcasting Ministry and Doordarshan with urgent need of functional autonomy for Doordarshan ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING SHRI V. N. GADGIL): The Second Press Commission made a recommendation for restructuring the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on the lines of the Railway Board. The Govermment has not yet taken a final decision on the recommendations of the Commission.